

Everyone Needs Someone To Talk To

Whether you're going through a difficult time or have just received wonderful news, everyone needs someone to talk to. Studies show that people who share their lives with others live longer, have fewer illnesses, and enjoy a better overall quality of life. So whom do you turn to when you're looking for support during the ups and downs in your life? Whom to you call for help or when you just want to chat?

Everyone's social support system is unique and is made up of people you feel comfortable being around. Below are a few suggestions of people who can be a part of your social support system.

- **Family.** The great thing about families is that, by design, they're already a social support system. You may find it easier to talk with family members because they know you better than anyone else. Families can be a built-in sounding board for your thoughts and ideas.
- **Friends.** Having good friends is like having a second family. The friends you make while in school, at work, or through clubs or associations can be an integral part of your social support system.
- **Co-workers.** It's been said that you spend more time at work than at home. It's no wonder then that co-workers are often an important part of a social support system. Talking to a trusted co-worker may help calm a stressful situation at work or at home. However, confiding in a co-worker should only be done if you're certain your confidence will be maintained.
- **Clergy.** If you're going through a difficult time, speaking with someone at your place of worship can put you at ease and give you direction. By turning to someone of your faith, you may be more likely to consider the advice and words given.
- **Pets.** Besides being man's best friend, pets play an important role in social support systems. As our lives constantly change, it's wonderful to have the reliable and unconditional companionship of a pet as a stabilizer. Pets can help you avoid feeling lonely and isolated. They're also a great way to meet new people!

Making time to connect with others is becoming harder and harder. But the lack of a social support system can lead to loneliness, isolation, anxiety, and depression. Today, more than ever, having someone to talk to—to share your thoughts and feelings with—is important for your emotional well-being.

Adapted from information found on www.seniorhealth.about.com

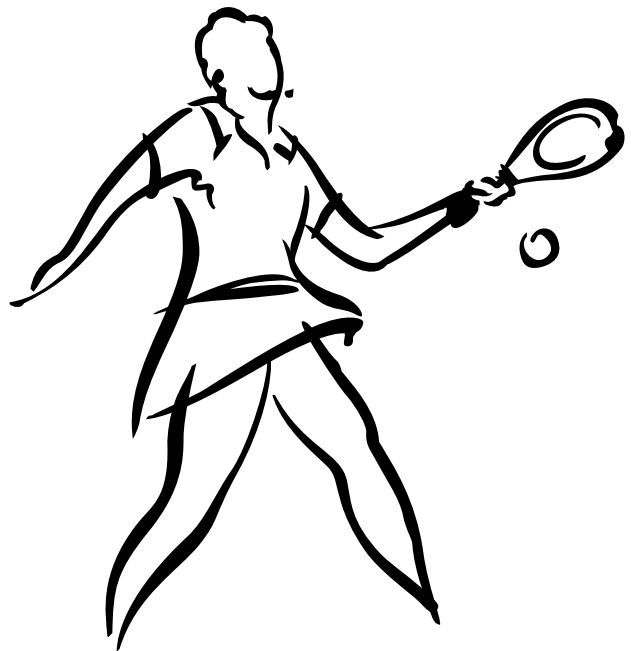


How to Create a Social Support System

Not everyone has a social support system. Maybe you've relocated to another city or through time all of your close friends have moved away. If you find yourself with no one to talk to, it may be time to create a new personal network of friends, colleagues, and peers. A social support system is important to maintaining your emotional health and enhancing your quality of life.

If you don't have a social support system, you may be wondering how to create one. Meeting new people might seem difficult, especially if you're quiet or shy, but it doesn't need to be. Here are a few fun and casual ways to help you begin.

- **Take classes or start a hobby.** Sign up for a community education class or take up a new hobby. These are both great ways to meet people with similar interests as yours.
- **Join a health club.** Exercise has numerous benefits such as releasing stress and staying fit. You'll meet people in a relaxed environment and there's already a pre-established common interest of working out.
- **Play team sports.** Joining a basketball, softball, or bowling league has many benefits. It will place you in a team environment where interaction and communication are necessary for success. It's a wonderful way to get to know people and develop friendships. You'll also get in some exercise while having fun.
- **Socialize with other co-workers.** If you get along well with co-workers, pick one day a week or month to get together for dinner or a movie. You may even be able to expand your circle by meeting each other's friends.
- **Volunteer for a cause that interests you.** Organizations are always looking for volunteers to assist them. It's a great way to meet other people who share your same interests and concerns. Volunteering can be a win-win situation for everyone.
- **Stay in touch using e-mail and phone calls.** When family and friends are not close by, extra effort is needed to stay connected to each other. Electronic social support systems work well when being in each other's company isn't possible.



Remember . . .

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to you and your eligible dependents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All services are confidential and provided at no cost to you. As part of your EAP, you now have access to MagellanAssist. Visit today at <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/benefits/other/eap/Assist.shtm>.

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